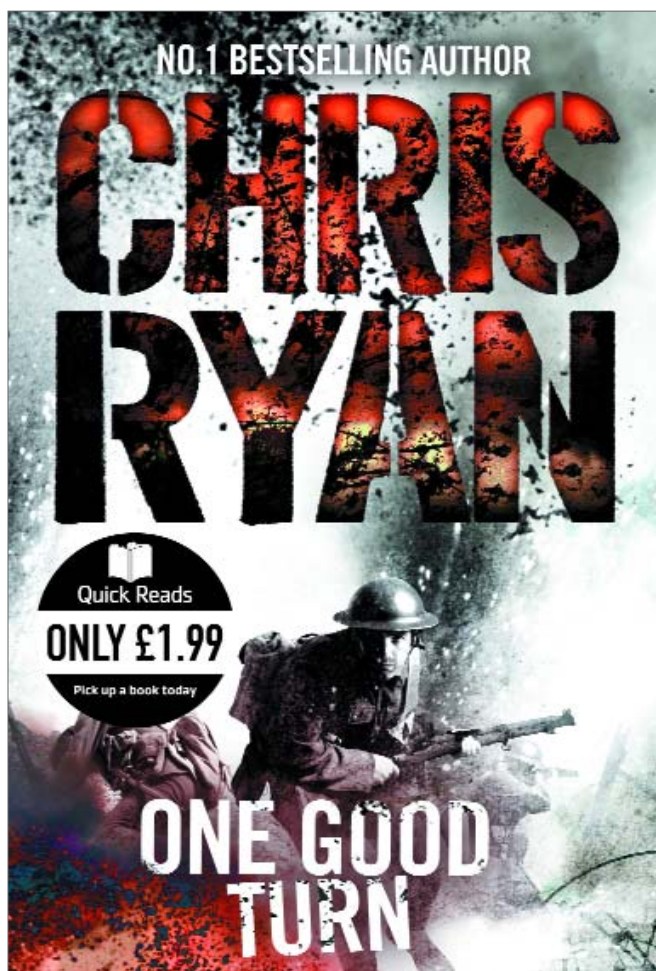




Quick Reads

The Vital Link Guide



One Good Turn
Chris Ryan

Introduction

The launch of a fourth set of Quick Reads titles on World Book Day in March 2008 provides another great opportunity to introduce less confident adult readers to the world of books. This is particularly important during the 2008 National Year of Reading which has adult literacy learners as a priority audience.

The response to the books published since the launch of the Quick Reads initiative in March 2006 has been enormously positive. Thousands of people have discovered an enjoyment of reading for the first time. Tutors and other professionals have recorded an increase in learners' confidence, motivation and acquisition of literacy skills.

The Vital Link encourages practitioners to integrate reading for pleasure into their work with adult literacy learners through partnership with the public library service. Support from the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills has enabled us to provide tools to link the Quick Reads into regular teaching practice and into more informal contact with adults who are improving their literacy skills.

As part of this work, The Vital Link has created resources to support use of the Quick Reads. These provide a 'way in' to using the books in a range of settings through ideas for discussion and extension activities. We have included suggestions for other reading materials, printed and online, and curriculum references for the main learning points.

The resources for the Quick Reads published in 2008 are available to download as individual PDF or Word files from www.vitallink.org.uk.

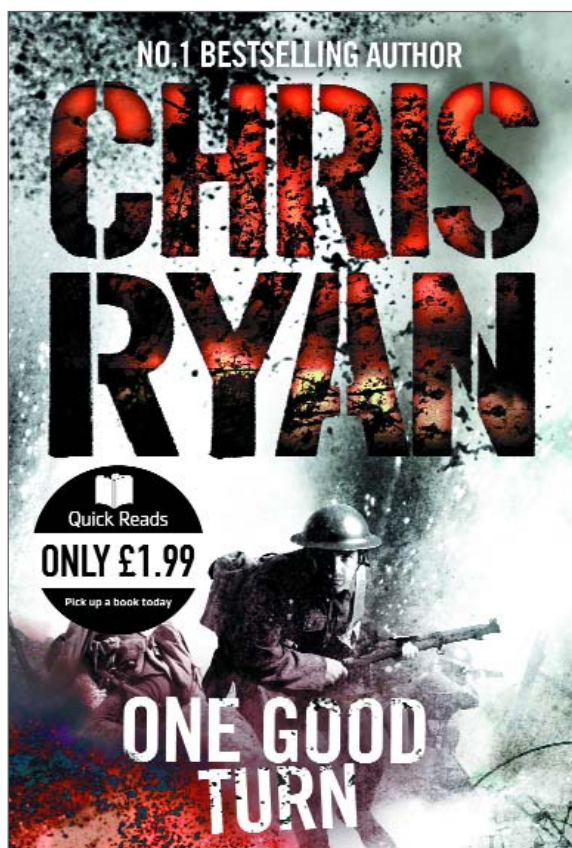
Similar materials for Quick Reads titles published in 2006 and 2007 are also available from www.vitallink.org.uk. *Starting with Quick Reads*, a 24-page guide supporting the Quick Reads titles published in 2007, is also available as a hard copy free from DIUS. Call 0845 6022260 (ref code SFLQR).

An innovative set of web-based activities for readers linked to the Quick Reads titles published in 2007 can be found at www.quickreadsideas.org.uk. A CD containing resources from 2006 and 2007 (excluding the web quests) for those without internet access is also available from DIUS. Call 0845 6022260 (ref code SFLQRCD).

**The
Vital
Link**

Our thanks go to writers Roger Adams and Gill Moore. The Vital Link is run by The Reading Agency in partnership with the National Literacy Trust.

We welcome all feedback on these ideas and on how you are using the Quick Reads. Please contact genevieve.clarke@readingagency.org.uk



Readability 11 Level 1

The Book

The story is set on the Western Front in 1917. A soldier wakes up in a prison, but cannot remember what happened to him or who he is. He soon learns he must face a court martial, and that his accusers think he is John Stubbs. But who is he really, and how can he find the truth on which his life depends? This atmospheric novel is troubling because of its affinity to the real plight of similar soldiers.

The Author

Chris Ryan was born near Newcastle in 1961. He joined the SAS in 1984. During his ten years in the service he took part in many dangerous missions, some of them in secret. He is now the Number 1 bestselling author of several SAS thrillers.

Book Talk

- What do the readers consider to be the strengths of this book? How well could they imagine the setting? Were they able to empathise with the characters and to what extent did they care about what happened to them?
- The story hinges on whether the prisoner can establish the truth in time. How did the author convey the desperation of the situation? How did they think it would end? What might have happened if the padre had arrived in time? Would it have been convincing if the prisoner was reprieved?
- How does the author create atmosphere? Look for the passages which appeal directly to the senses – the sound of the bursting shells, the feeling of the cold, wet mud (see Chapter 4 for example). Choose a couple of paragraphs and look at how many powerful verbs the author uses.
- Read the Postscript. What is a postscript? What does it add to the story? Draw readers attention to the title of the book '*One good turn*' (deserves another). Notice how the story has been told in the third person up to this point. The Postscript switches to the first person – there is now a narrator, The narrator says he is not making a point, but is Chris Ryan? If so, what do you think it is?
- Invite the readers to jot down a few words to act as chapter headings. Then draw out how all the even-numbered chapters are about the hero, while the odd-numbered chapters are about the other main characters – Stubbs up to Chapter 6, and then the padre. Talk about how this structural device enables the author to inter-weave different times, places and pieces of the action.

Taking it Further

⋯⋯ *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* is a line from the Roman poet Horace. It means: 'It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country'. Do the readers agree? It is also the title of a poem by Wilfred Owen, who calls it 'the old lie'. Read Owen's poem to the group. Ask readers to consider why a writer might choose a different format (poetry, prose, factual report?) to represent what happens in war.

⋯⋯ Find out more about the First World War soldiers. There is a wealth of information at www.aftermathww1.com/index.asp. A way to reflect on class divisions and the crass attitudes of some of the officers without being too depressing, would be to watch some episodes of the BBC television series *Blackadder Goes Forth*. Episode 2 contains a court martial which could lead to an exploration of heroism and cowardice.

⋯⋯ Try to write a soldier's diary entry or a letter home using some of the techniques which Ryan uses to create atmosphere – powerful verbs and adjectives which convey the sensory experiences as well as the action.

Find some photos of the First World War and try to write some captions or headlines to go with them. <http://images.google.com/> is a good source.

Learning Objectives

The curriculum references below are for Entry 3 or Level 1, but the suggested activities are quite open-ended to allow for the range of abilities found in many settings. Supported reading and discussion should enable readers with lower levels of literacy to be included.

Follow and comprehend the main events of the novel	Rt/E3.1; Rt/L1.1
Use features of the novel to find specific detail	Rt/E3.5; RT/L1.4
Express an opinion based on the text	SLd/E3.2, SLc/L1.4
Recognise how an author uses language and other textual features for different effects	Rt/E3.4; Rt/L1.2
Follow and contribute to discussion	Sld/E3.1,2; Sld/L1.1
Write using a style appropriate to your purpose	Wt/E3.3; Wt/L1.4
Judge what to include in a piece of writing	Wt/E3.1, Wt/L1.2

What Shall We Read Next?

If your readers like poetry, there are different views of war in Tennyson's *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (is this a piece of Victorian spin?) and 'Naming of parts' from *Lessons of War* by Henry Reed, which is about the boredom of training.

Chris Ryan has written over 20 other gripping novels.

Read about the war correspondent John Simpson's experiences in *Twenty Tales from the War Zone*, also in the Quick Reads series.

Robert Cormier's book *Heroes* tells the story of Francis, who returns from war horribly disfigured but with a dark secret, for which he is determined to seek revenge. A unique version using a graphic format interspersed with short text passages is published in the Hodder Graphics series - see www.hoddereducation.co.uk.

Look for current news stories about war on www.bbc.co.uk/news, or one of the other TV news services or online national newspapers.

Other Quick Reads with the theme of combat

Hell Island by Matthew Reilly

Desert Claw by Damien Lewis

The Poison in the Blood by Tom Holland

Someone Like Me by Tom Holt

See the following pages for additional sources of support for working with emergent readers and a complete list of Quick Reads titles.

Further Information

See www.quickreads.org.uk for more about Quick Reads 2008 and the supporting campaign run by NIACE.

You can find a wider range of books suitable for Entry3/Level 1 readers at www.firstchoicebooks.org.uk

Copies of the Quick Reads titles first published, re-issued or reprinted in 2008 can be purchased at all main bookshops and supermarket chains. Bulk quantities can be ordered from the following suppliers:

- Avanti – orders@avantibooks.com 01438 747000 www.avantibooks.com
- Bertrams/THE – books@bertrams.com 0871 303 6600 www.bertramsthe.com
- Browns Books for Students – schools.services@brownsbfs.co.uk 01482 384660 www.bfs.co.uk
- Gardners – custcare@gardners.com 01323 521777 www.gardners.com

Audio versions of the Quick Reads are available from W F Howes Ltd as part of their Clipper Emergent Reader programme – sales@wfhowes.co.uk 01664 423000 www.wfhowes.co.uk/cerp/

Large print versions of several of the Quick Reads titles are available from BBC Audiobooks Ltd – library.sales@bbc.com 01225 335336 www.bbcaudiobooks.com/libraries

Audio extracts from the Quick Reads can be found on the BBC RaW website at www.bbc.co.uk/raw along with a range of resources to support the BBC RaW campaign.

The Quick Reads project in Wales is a joint venture between the Welsh Arts Council and The Basic Skills Agency. Further details can be found at www.quickreads.net

Publishers producing titles specifically for emergent readers include:

- New Island Open Door series www.newisland.ie
- Sandstone Press Vista series and accompanying education packs www.sandstonepress.com
- Barrington Stoke www.barringtonstoke.co.uk (teenagers and young adults)
- Ransom Publishing www.ransom.co.uk (teenagers and young adults)

Gatehouse Media Limited publishes and distributes books and resources for use in adult basic education, including Gatehouse Books written by and for adult beginner readers www.gatehousebooks.org.uk

New Leaf Publishing publishes titles by and for adults who are new to reading and have low levels of literacy www.newleafpublishing.org.uk

Full List of Quick Reads Titles, Including Availability

New titles published March 2008

<i>Doctor Who: Revenge of the Judoon</i>	Terrance Dicks	978 1 846 07372 4
<i>East End Tales</i>	Gilda O'Neill	978 0 141 03494 2
<i>The Girl on the Platform</i>	Josephine Cox	978 0 00 727008 8
<i>Happy Families</i>	Adele Parks	978 0 141 03491 1
<i>The Hardest Test</i>	Scott Quinnell	978 1 90612595 0
<i>Humble Pie</i>	Gordon Ramsay	978 0 00727096 5
<i>Life's New Hurdles</i>	Colin Jackson	978 1 90612593 6
<i>One Good Turn</i>	Chris Ryan	978 0 099 52234 8
<i>RaW Voices: True Stories of Hardship and Hope</i>	Vanessa Feltz (ed)	978 1 846 07446 2
<i>The 10 Keys to Success</i>	John Bird	978 0 091 92360 0

Quick Reads backlist

<i>Aim High</i>	Tanni Grey Thompson	1905170890 978 1 905 17089 0
<i>Bring it Back Home</i>	Niall Griffiths	1905170912 978 1 905 17091 3
<i>Chickenfeed</i>	Minette Walters	978 0 330 44031 8
<i>Cleanskin</i>	Val McDermid	978 0 007 21672 7
<i>Danny Wallace and the Centre of the Universe</i>	Danny Wallace	978 0 091 90894 2
<i>A Day To Remember</i>	Fiona Phillips	1905170904 978 1 905 17090 6
<i>Doctor Who: I Am a Dalek</i>	Gareth Roberts	978 0 563 486480
<i>Doctor Who: Made of Steel</i>	Terrance Dicks	978 1 846 07204 8
<i>Don't Make Me Laugh</i>	Patrick Augustus	978 1 902 934464
<i>A Dream Come True</i>	Maureen Lee	978 0 7528 8239 0
<i>The Grey Man</i>	Andy McNab	978 0 552 15433 8
<i>Hell Island</i>	Matthew Reilly	978 0 330 442329
<i>How to Change Your Life in 7 Steps</i>	John Bird	978 0 091 90703 7
<i>Lily</i>	Adele Geras	978 0 752 88224 6
<i>The Name You Once Gave Me</i>	Mike Phillips	978 0 007 216710
<i>Reading My Arse!</i>	Ricky Tomlinson	978 0 7515 3953 0
<i>The Rubber Woman</i>	Lindsay Ashford	1905170882 978 1 905 17088 3
<i>Star Sullivan</i>	Maeve Binchy	978 0 75287 954 3
<i>The Sun Book of Short Stories</i>		978 0 553 181882 6
<i>Survive the Worst and Aim for the Best</i>	Kerry Katona	978 0 091 91754 8
<i>Twenty Tales from the War Zone</i>	John Simpson	978 0 330 44999 1

Other Titles (only available in libraries)

<i>Blackwater</i>	Conn Iggulden	978 0 007 22166 0
<i>The Book Boy</i>	Joanna Trollope	978 0 747 58211 3
<i>Burning Ambition</i>	Allen Carr	978 0 141 03030 2
<i>The Corpse's Tale</i>	Katherine John	1905170319
<i>Desert Claw</i>	Damien Lewis	0099493535
<i>The Dying Wish</i>	Courtia Newland	0349119635
<i>I Love Football</i>	Hunter Davies	0755314700
<i>The Poison in the Blood</i>	Tom Holland	0349119643
<i>Screw it, Let's Do It</i>	Richard Branson	0753510995
<i>Secrets</i>	Lynne Barrett-Lee	1905170300
<i>Someone Like Me</i>	Tom Holt	1841494461
<i>The Team</i>	Mick Dennis with the Premier League	0552153729
<i>The Thief</i>	Ruth Rendell	0091796865
<i>Winner Takes All</i>	John Francome	0755329481
<i>Woman Walks into a Bar</i>	Rowan Coleman	0099492288